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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to assess the relationship between churches and community colleges in northern Illinois, a questionnaire examining the nature and extent of church-college interaction as well as provisions for teaching religion in the community colleges was sent to 36 administrators at 14 colleges. Twenty-seven individuals responded (a 75 percent response rate), and at least one survey was returned from all 14 schools. Ten institutions reported that they do engage in cooperative efforts with churches through the office of community services, such as use of church facilities for extension classes, on-campus religious counseling, etc. Nine colleges reported cooperative efforts with churches through their office of student personnel services, the most prevalent of which were student religious groups or clubs recognized by the student activities office, and space offered to the clergy for on-campus counseling activities. Religion was studied as a part of existing courses at 11 colleges, nine colleges offered specific courses in religion, but none of the 14 schools had a separate religious studies program or department. Steps taken to initiate a cooperative program between a local college and area churches are detailed. The survey questionnaire, cover letter, and an article pertaining to the church-college relationship are appended. (AH)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE CHURCHES

by Mark Rutledge

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

1. What does some of the literature indicate regarding a viable theoretical base for a relationship between the community colleges and the churches?

2. What is the extent of the interaction between community colleges and churches in Northern Illinois at present?

3. What is the nature of the interaction between community colleges and churches in Northern Illinois at present?

4. Do community colleges make any provision for the teaching of religion as an academic subject?

5. Using the information derived from attempting some answers to these four questions, would it be possible intentionally to develop one new program at Kishwaukee Community College?

PROCEDURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Survey of Some Literature. I discovered that there is very little material published on the relation of the church and community college. However, I did find three articles, one monograph, and one professional newspaper which provided the working assumptions and structural models for an approach to questions 2-5. A brief summary of the most relevant material follows.

A) William Hallman, in his article "Ministry and the Community College," sees two areas for cooperative relations between the two institutions. The first concerns the church's role as advocate for the mission of the community college in providing educational opportunities for high risk students, and interpreter to the community of the community college's unique functions. The second argues that the primary relation of the church to the community college should be through the office of community services rather than through the student activities office as is the usual response of the church and is the expectation of most college administrators. Hallman states that the church and college can develop creative coalitions to carry out special community projects to meet community needs. (3)

B) Robert Mayo, in an article "Community Development and the Church," agrees with Hallman that the key point of intersection between the two institutions is community service.

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He states that the church and the college, in identifying and experiencing community problems, begin to see that neither institution can exist removed from major social problems, and, in many cases, failure to become a part of the solution makes the institutions themselves a part of the problem. The line between "we" and "they" becomes thin once genuine community involvement begins to take place. The question for both institutions becomes one and the same: How can we work together to further the development of the community? (4)

C) Roger Schmidt deals with the teaching of religion in an article, "Religion and the Community College." He argues that if the universities can teach about religion, the community colleges cannot be far behind. He shows how current legal and educational policies provide a context in which the prospect for the future for teaching religion in the public schools is bright. He has conducted a non-comprehensive survey in California which indicates that some community colleges already have developed programs in religious studies. He finds three ways in which religion is taught: as part of existing courses, as separate courses, and in an organized department or program of religious studies. (5)

D) For those who wish to initiate cooperative ventures between church and college Mary Alice Geier has published a monograph-handbook, "There's A Community College in My Town. What Do I Do Now?", as a handbook for churchmen concerned about community colleges. This offers practical, step-by-step advice on how to go about developing different levels of cooperative relationships between church and college. (2)

E) United Ministries in Higher Education, a national agency for campus ministry for ten cooperating denominations, has published a newspaper, Connexion; their Fall issue was devoted to the community college and contains a number of helpful articles, one of which is included in this paper. (1)

2. Designing and Implementing A Survey. In order to gather data on questions 2-4 a survey instrument was designed and mailed to administrators in 14 Northern Illinois Community Colleges. A step-by-step analysis of the procedures used follows.

A) The first draft of a letter and questionnaire was written, and feedback was requested from Dr. William Ogilvie, Director Community College Center, Northern Illinois University.

B) Final drafts of these were written in order to incorporate

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suggestions from Dr. Ogilvie.

C) The final draft of the letter and questionnaire were mailed to 36 administrators at 14 community colleges in Northern Illinois. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed, along with a re-print of an article on the community college and the church. Samples are included below.

D) Since the literature suggested three possible areas for cooperation--office of community services, office of Dean of students, and the teaching of religion--the questionnaire was designed to reflect these. This same rationale dictated the choice of administrators to receive the questionnaire--the Dean of Students, the Dean of Community Services, and the Dean of Instruction. In those cases where an institution did not have all three positions, the questionnaire was mailed only to the administrators they did have.

E) Twenty seven individuals returned the questionnaire, indicating a 75% response. These responses included questionnaires from all 14 colleges surveyed, indicating a 100% response from the institutions.

E) Responses to each question were tabulated according to both individual response and institutional response. In several cases there were discrepancies between two or more individuals at a single institution. Where this occurred the method for recording the response for the instutition was to "give the benefit of doubt," e.g., if one individual marked a "no" response to an area of cooperation and another individual marked "yes," then the "yes" was recorded for the institution. One could speculate on bow well any given administrator knows his or her own college!

F) In addition to computing "Yes," "No," and Don't Know" responses, a number of comments on the open-ended questions were noted.

3. Significant Findings of the Study. An analysis of the data involved in the study indicates that:

A) Ten institutions report that they do engage in cooperative efforts with churches through the office of community services. (18 individuals so responded)

Three institutions do not engage in cooperative efforts through community services office. (6 individuals)

One institutions reports "don't know." (3 individuals)

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B) In specifying examples of cooperation through the office of community services the following were cited:

-Special courses and Adult Education, i.e., religious educators' workshop; Bible History courses; Religious Trends in the 1970's; Religious Creative Arts Workshop

-Use of church facilities for extension classes

-Offering of both credit and adult education classes in Church Community Centers

-Adult Basic Education (ABE); Churches provide facilities, help recruit students, and assist with program planning and development

-Work together on community problems, e.g., conduct a housing survey

-Special seminars and workshops (V.D.; Drug Abuse Prevention)

-Provide on-campus religious counseling

-Provide special classes in preparation for the General Education Diploma (GED) at a local church from 9:00 to 3:00 five days a week.

C) Nine colleges report that they do engage in cooperative efforts with churches through the office of student personnel services. (15 individuals)

Four colleges do not engage in cooperative efforts through the office of student personnel services. (10 individuals)

One college reports "don't know." (2 individuals)

D) In specifying examples of cooperation through the office of student personnel services the following were cited:

-Student religious groups or clubs recognized through the student activities office. (Eight colleges reported the existence of such groups)

-Clergy offered space on campus for counseling activities. (Five colleges reported this, and two stated they offered office space in the college counseling center)

-Two colleges refer students to ministers off campus

-Recognize and work with Campus Crusade for Christ (one college)

-Experimentation with a "consultation," i.e., an ecumenical group of clergymen serving as liaison between area churches and the college.

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-Local clergy volunteer time on campus, e.g., to offer discussion groups, seminars, meet with students.

E) Eleven colleges offer the study of religion as part of existing courses. (17 individuals)

Three colleges report that they do not offer the study of religion as part of existing courses. (10 individuals)

* F) Nine colleges report that they offer specific courses in religion through already established departments. Examples cited were Bible Literature and Comparative Religions. (12 individuals)

Five colleges said they did not offer specific courses in religion. (15 individuals)

G) Fourteen colleges report that they do not have a separate religious studies program or department. (27 individuals)

H) Six colleges responded that there were "other" areas where their programs and those of churches intersect.

I) Examples of "other" areas were cited as:

-Some TESL classes are offered independently

-Cooperation with a speakers bureau--ministers appear on many college programs

-Religious leaders serve on an advisory committee

-Campus lecture series; use of campus for distribution of non-denominational religious literature

-Use of audio-visual equipment, personnel, and facilities to develop tapes on Christian ethics for use by area churches and by instructional people in philosophy

-In relation to opportunities for students in college's Human Services two-year occupational program

-Day care program

-Senior citizens programs

4. A Case Study: Using the Data to Develop One Proposal at Kish-Waukee Community College. By way of background it should be noted that the author, a campus minister, adopted an advocate role (as suggested in the Hallman article) in supporting a recent succesful bond issue which permits the college to increase the educational fund tax by up to 7½ cents per $100 assessed valuation, and to increase the building maintenance fund by 2½ cents per $100 assessed valuation. Material inter-

*In several colleges these are taught by local ministers

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preting the referendum, and an article advocating the churches to support community colleges were mailed to over 70 local ministers in the college district along with a cover letter urging support of the bond issue. This may account, in part, for the development of rapport and a base of supportive and cooperative relationships for the development of future programs.

The following steps were followed in attempting to develop one new cooperative program between Kishwaukee College and area churches:

A) A meeting where ideas were exchanged and explored involving a campus minister, the Executive Dean of the College, and the Director of Community Relations and a faculty member from the College.

B) Some of the data from this study, showing what some programs are currently in effect, were shared and discussed.

C) Several possible areas of future cooperation were discussed. Alternatives were considered.

D) Staff from the College suggested the possible formation of an ecumenical advisory committee to work with the college in program planning and development. (It should be noted that one other college is also attempting to do this, according to the survey)

E) The campus minister agreed to take initiative in trying to recruit a 6-10 member committee which would represent the major faiths in the district as well as geographical area.

F) Five members so far contacted have agreed to serve on such a committee and an initial meeting is planned to be held once before the end of this semester.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The theoretical base, suggested by the review of literature, has been shown to provide a viable operational model for the purposes of designing this survey.

2. The majority of the colleges surveyed are currently engaged in a variety of cooperative ventures with churches.

3. On the basis of such present cooperation it would seem reasonable to predict that programs can be expanded and extended if intentional efforts are made. This has been shown to be the case in one community.

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5 Schmidt, Roger, "Religion in the Community College," Pub. National Campus Ministry Project with Community Colleges, 848 Pittock Block, Portland, Oregon

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COLLEGES PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY:

Waubonsee
Triton
Thornton
Sauk Valley
Rock Valley
McHenry County
Lake County
Joliet
Illinois Valley
Highland
Harper
Elgin
Du Page
Kishwaukee

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UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES
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Campus Minister
MARK RUTLEDGE

February 15, 1974

Dr. Alfred Wisgoski
Illinois Valley Community College
District #513
RR #1
Oglesby, Illinois 61348

Dear Dr. Wisgoski:

I am writing to ask you for your help in providing information regarding the community colleges and the churches in Illinois. I am participating in a statewide commission representing several religious agencies concerned to develop creative liaison with community colleges. We are starting our needs assessment process by attempting to gather data regarding current areas where the missions of two institutions intersect.

It would be a very real help to us if you will take 5 or 10 minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

In the event you are interested in our own assumptions, the enclosed article, which we distributed during our campaign to support Kishwaukee College's recent successful referendum, will provide you with a brief statement of our concerns.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Mark Rutledge

Mark Rutledge
MR:jr
Enc.(s)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY

1. Does the community services office of your institution engage in any kind of cooperative efforts with churches in your district?

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

2. If Yes, please specify how. (E.g., collaborative work on community problems, special courses, adult education, extension, etc.)

3. Does the office of student personnel services engage in any kind of cooperative relationship with churches in your district?

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

4. If Yes, please specify how. (E.g., recognized student religious groups, local ministers volunteer time on campus, etc.)

5. Does the college offer the study of religion as part of existing courses? (E.g., philosophy, history, English, etc.)

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

6. Does the college offer specific courses in religion through already established departments? (E.g., philosophy of religion, ethics, etc.)

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

7. Has the college organized a separate religious studies program or department?

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

8. Are there any other areas (other than those above) where the programs of the college and those of the churches intersect?

_____Yes _____No _____Don't know

9. If Yes, please specify.

Title of person completing this questionnaire_____

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(This article first appeared in Connexion, a publication of United Ministries in Higher Education. UMHE is a non-profit corporation of ten denominations providing a ministry in higher education: American Baptist Churches, USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, The Episcopal Church, Moravian Church in America Northern Province, Presbyterian Church in the US, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, United Presbyterian Church in the USA. The article is reprinted with permission of the author by United Campus Ministries at Northern Illinois University as a service to the whole church and the people of the Kishwaukee Community College District. Additional copies may be requested from the UCM office, 424 Normal Rd., DeKalb, or phone 756-7215.)

COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THE CHURCH

by Verlyn D. Barker

Perhaps the real revolution in higher education is taking place almost without notice: The Community College has become a major force in higher education in the United States. The Carnegie Foundation Report envisions adding by 1980 from 230 to 280 new community colleges to the more than 1,000 that already exist, enrolling 35 to 40 per cent of all undergraduate students.

While the great universities living in the shadow of urban ghettos were being forced to give attention to community needs, community colleges were being established in urban areas with the commitment to community service. While students on prestigious campuses protested elitist admission standards, community colleges pledged themselves to the "open door" policy. While university faculty were rewarded for their research and publications, community colleges were priding themselves on the fact that classroom teaching was their measure, and while others were experimenting with pass-fail grades in selected courses, the community colleges were struggling to find a way to do away with the concept of "failure" for the whole learning process.

As the community college struggles to establish its identity, two factors are particularly essential to comprehend as the church seeks to understand and define its relationship to this segment of higher education. One is the "new student." In the community college there is a strong movement against making the "new student" into the image of the traditional student through remedial courses, motivational incentives, counseling, etc. The "new student" to higher education is not of the elite—economically or academically. Rather, this person is likely to be found classified in the lowest third of the academic standards—those not making it by the usual "meritocratic" measures; those whose academic life will be one that has been caught in the syndrome of failure with all its devastating effects. The community college is and will be the primary entry for these students into post-secondary education. The question for the church is: Will the church seek ways to become an advocate with others for the rights of these high-risk students and the unique task which the community college can offer?

The second phenomenon of the '70s which may define the unique role of the community college is the new emphasis on and the new definition of "community services." Where once this meant lectures, concerts, recreation and art

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programs, and use of facilities by community groups, now community services involve being a catalytic force in supplying leadership for stimulating programs aimed at community problems. Community services are becoming the cutting edge by which the colleges penetrate into the life of the community and through which the total program of the college becomes relevant to community needs—no longer neutral and passive, but a viable force for change! The interest of the church on the basis of the community services dimension is obvious. Both institutions are, or should be, concerned about community problems; both are, or should be, concerned about using their resources for understanding and addressing these problems. Just as an educational process that emphasizes citizen participation in community development is in education of the highest order, so too is affirmation and participation in community development at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In this new relationship between community colleges and the church is an opportunity for the fullest realization of both institutions of these roles and functions in modern society. Each institution has its own foundations and history, its own integrity; but the purposes of both include serving human need.

The goal of United Ministries in Higher Education is to help develop community colleges which are committed to the needs of the persons they serve and to the needs of the communities they serve. To accomplish this goal, UMHE seeks:

1. to work with those in the community colleges who seek to strengthen the community service orientation of these colleges;

2. to work with those in the community colleges who believe the resources of these institutions should be used to respond to community problems in housing, social injustice, poverty, crime, and delinquency;

3. to foster in the congregations a commitment to join forces with the community colleges in responding to community and human needs.

Verlyn Barker is President of the United Ministries in Higher Education National Commission.

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